1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

however, very common. Kannaḍa was the court and official language of Coorg under the Lingāyaṭ Rājas, and nowadays it is the medium of instruction in schools. Besides, every Coorg is able to speak it.

Educated Coorgs are usually trilingual, knowing Koḍagi, Kannaḍa, and English. Koḍagi is used in the home, Kannaḍa in talking to most non-Coorgs excepting Malayāḷīs, and English in official matters, and occasionally in conversation with strangers. English is popular with Coorgs, and even women, especially those under thirty, have some acquaintance with it.

In 1931 there were 44,585 Koḍagi-speakers though the total number of Coorgs was only 41,026. This discrepancy is due to the fact that several castes and tribes have taken over the language of Coorgs, who have throughout been the dominant group in Coorg. In fact, only a few castes have escaped the temptation to imitate Coorgs in dress, customs, and manners. In the past some families of Wynāḍ Cheṭṭis, Kannaḍa Okkaligas, Tuḷu Gauḍas, and others did succeed in entering the Coorg fold. Even now some non-Coorgs aspire to be Coorgs. For instance, during the 1931 Census, a number of Kannaḍa Okkaligas and Tuḷu Gauḍas in north Coorg succeeded in getting themselves enumerated as Coorgs as they had been described as 'Jamma Koḍagas' in the title-deeds conferring on them the right to hold land under the concession tenure of *jamma* (see pp. 16–17). The enumerators, in spite of their strict instructions to check all doubtful cases thoroughly, had to enumerate such persons as Coorgs. It is presumed, however, that their number did not exceed a thousand.[1]

IV

Coorg enters history in the ninth century A.D., but the information we possess at present about the period between the ninth and seventeenth centuries is very little indeed. We do know, however, that ever since the period for which we have any information, the fortunes of the powerful south Indian Kingdoms in the east have had effects on Coorg. In the ninth and tenth centuries the Changāḷvas, who ruled some parts of Coorg, were feudatory to the Gangas of Talkāḍ in Mysore. The Changāḷvas (Kings of Changanāḍ) ruled certain areas to the west of Mysore city and the eastern

[1] *Census of India*, 1931, vol. xiii, p. 42.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

175 and northern parts of Coorg excluding Ēḷusāvirashīmé Hōbḷi, at present called Shanivārasanté Hōbḷi. This latter area was part of the territory ruled by the Kongāḷva Kings in the eleventh century. Both the Changāḷvas and Kongāḷvas were Jains by faith, and Changāḷva inscriptions have been found in Yeḍavanāḍ in the north and Beṭṭyetnāḍ in the south (see Map 3). It is probable that their territory included Tala Kāvēri as well.

The Chōḷas of the Tamil country defeated the Gangas in the beginning of the eleventh century, and they claim to have conquered Coorg as well. Both the Changāḷvas and Kongāḷvas now became feudatory to the Chōḷas.

The Hoysaḷas, a dynasty which rose to power in western Mysore after the fall of the Gangas, succeeded in the twelfth century in driving the Chōḷas out of Mysore. The Changāḷvas, who had accepted the overlordship of both the Gangas and Chōḷas, refused to accept the overlordship of the Hoysaḷas and claimed independence. Several battles took place between the two before the Hoysaḷas were able to establish their authority. These battles are important for us, for the first reference to Coorgs as a body occurs in an inscription referring to one of them. We find Coorgs fighting for their Changāḷva ruler against the invader from Mysore.

In 1145 the Hoysaḷa king Narasimha I slew the Changāḷva ruler in battle and captured his elephants, horses, gold, and jewels. Thereafter the Changāḷvas appear to have withdrawn into Coorg, for in 1174 Ballāḷa II sent his general Beṭṭarasa against them in Pālparé in Hattugaṭṭanāḍ in Kiggaṭnāḍ (see Map 3). Beṭṭarasa was victorious, and he built a town at Pālparé which he made his capital. But Pemma-Vīrappa, joined by Budigoṇḍéya Nandidēva, Udiyāditya of Kurchi (village), and others, 'the Koḍagas of all the *nāḍs*', marched against Pālparé and attacked Beṭṭarasa, who seems [101] to have got the worst of it at first, but was finally victorious. This is the earliest reference to Coorgs by name.[1]

The defeated Changāḷvas seem to have accepted the suzerainty of the Hoysaḷas. In 1252 the Hoysaḷa king Somēshwara visited them at Rāmanāthapura, when the Changāḷva capital was at Shrīrangapaṭṇa, south of the Kāvēri near Siddāpur. The Changāḷvas had now changed their faith from Jainism to Lingayāṭism, a popular sect devoted exclusively to the worship of Shiva, which arose in the Kannaḍa country in the twelfth century A.D.

[1] *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, new edition, Oxford, 1908, vol. xi, p. 10.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

When the Vijayanagar kingdom replaced the Hoysaḷas in the fourteenth century the Changāḷvas became feudatory to them. The Vijayanagar kingdom, extending over a great part of south India, remained in power till 1565 when it was defeated by the Muslims at the Battle of Tāḷikoṭa.

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Vijayanagar kings had bestowed on, or confirmed to, vassal chiefs bearing various titles, sundry tracts in Mysore, on the condition of paying tribute and rendering military service. Those in the north were controlled direct from the capital. The southern chiefs were under a viceroy, termed the Śrī Ranga Rāyal at Seringapaṭam. After the disaster of Tāḷikōṭa, although nominal allegiance continued to be paid to the viceroy, such of the chiefs as had the power gradually declared their independence.[1]

Among the chiefs who became independent were the Nāyakas of Bēḍnūr, the Changāḷvas who ruled over a good part of Coorg, and the Woḍéyars of Mysore. The last-mentioned of these rose to power after the fall of Vijayanagar, absorbing many of its former dependencies.

The authority of the viceroy seems to have been recognized in a shadowy way even after the fall of Vijayanagar until 1610 when Mysore captured Seringapaṭam, the seat of the viceroy's government. The Changāḷvas seem to have been friends with the viceroy who, in 1607, confirmed the Maḷalavāḍi country[2] to Piriyarāja (or Rudragaṇa), the Changāḷva king of the Nanjarājapaṭṇa branch.

A clear account of the history of the Changāḷva kings in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is not yet available. It is known, however, that in the beginning of the sixteenth century Nanjarāja founded their capital of Nanjarājapaṭṇa. In 1589 Piriya Rāja (Rudragaṇa) rebuilt Singapaṭṇa and named it after himself, Piriyāpaṭṇa. A branch of the Changāḷvas seem to have ruled in Piriyāpaṭṇa in the seventeenth century. The exact date when this dynasty came to an end is not certain as, according to the existing account, the last Rāja was killed in 1644 while fighting Mysoreans. According to the same account Doḍḍa Vīrappa (Vīra Rāja II) was

[1] *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, vol. xviii, p. 176.

[2] He did this because the deity Annadāni Mallikārjuna on the Beṭṭadapura hill in Huṇsūr tālūk (or Maḷalavāḍi) was the family deity of the Changāḷvas of the Nanjarājapaṭṇa branch, and the viceroy wanted the worship of the deity to continue as long as this branch of the Changāḷvas continued to exist. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, vol. xi, p. 11.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

175 reigning in Coorg at this time, but we know for certain that he did not ascend the throne till 1686, forty-two years after 1644.

Firishta, the historian of Akbar and Jahāngir, states that at the end of the sixteenth century Coorg Proper was ruled by its chiefs or Nāyakas, who acknowledged the supremacy of Vijayanagar, but constantly fought among themselves.[1] The chaotic situation was taken advantage of by a prince of the neighbouring Ikkēri or Bēḍnūr dynasty, who at first settled in Hālēri, north of Mercara, as a Jangama or Lingāyaṭ priest, and succeeded in gradually bringing the entire country under his control.

The Nāyakas of Bēḍnūr, the Rulers of Piriyāpaṭṇa, and the Rājas of Coorg were all related to each other. It is even possible that the Rājas of Coorg were thought of as in some way dependent upon the Nāyakas of Bēḍnūr: this would help to explain Haider Ali's regarding himself as liege lord of Coorg when he had conquered Bēḍnūr in 1763.

The prince of the Bēḍnūr dynasty who settled down as a *jangama* or Lingāyaṭ priest in Hālēri in north Coorg was an astute strategist. He was well aware of the fact that a *jangama* commanded a great deal of respect from Lingāyaṭs who predominated in north Coorg. He lived in a village council house (*chāvaḍi*), teaching children and preaching to adults. People voluntarily gave him uncleaned paddy (*dhūḷi bhatta*) at harvest. Later, when he was certain of his hold over the people, he changed the voluntary contribution to a compulsory levy of one and a half *bhaṭṭis* (*bhaṭṭi* = 80 *seers*) of rice, and a sum of nine annas and eight pies per house per annum. He also called upon his followers to guard his dwelling in turns. The watchmen were called *chāvaḍikāras* or 'men of the *chāvaḍi*', a name which was later used for the Rāja's troops. The priest-politician next declared himself ruler of Hālēri and surrounding *nāḍs*, and the chiefs ruling over small areas of Coorg Proper submitted to his authority on condition that he allowed them to keep to themselves three-quarters of the revenue collected by them from their subjects, and pay only a fourth to him as their overlord. The Rāja's authority continued to increase. The troublesome chiefs were gradually eliminated, and only those who did not constitute a threat to his authority were allowed to survive. But their capacity for mischief had not entirely been destroyed, as will be seen later.

[1] *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, vol. xi, p. 11. 'Nāyaka' in Kannaḍa means 'leader', and it seems to have been a title assumed by anybody with a following.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

Muddu Rāja (1633–86), the grandson of the founder of the dynasty of the Lingāyaṭ Rājas, moved the capital from Hālēri to Mercara in 1681, and this continues to be the capital today. It is not certain whether it was Muddu Rāja or his son Doḍḍa Vīrappa (Vīra Rāja II) who reorganized the administration, altering the existing *nāḍ*[1] boundaries and creating a clear hierarchy of headmen (*takkas*), and four appellate courts (*paṭṭis*) for the settlement of disputes.

The consolidation of the authority of the Rājas which began with the founder was completed only during the time of his great grandson Doḍḍa Vīrappa (Vīra Rāja II). During the latter's reign we hear of the efforts of Uttu Nāyaka, a chieftain in Armēri in Beppunāḍ, to get the country invaded from the south by Kōṭangaḍi Vīra Varma while Vīra Rāja II was defending the country from the Mysoreans in the east. Vīra Rāja II was luckily able to beat off both the eastern and southern invaders.

The struggle between Mysore and Coorg which began during the time of the Hoysaḷas and continued till the end of the reign of Vīra Rāja II assumed a particularly severe form in the latter half of the eighteenth century, after the usurpation of the Mysore throne by Haider Aḷi. The severity reached its climax during the reign of Tippu Sultan, Haider's son, and only ended with his death in 1799. Coorgs fought repeatedly for their king and country against the invaders, paying a heavy price for their loyalty.

Haider conquered Bēḍnūr in 1763, and he seems to have thought that this entitled him to suzerainty over Coorg, a claim which he tried to assert by force as well as cunning. In the complicated struggle between him and the Rājas of Coorg, he does not seem to have made any considerable progress so long as the question of succession to the Coorg throne was clear and undisputed.

But the death in 1770 of Muddu Rāja II and Muddayya Rāja, who were both jointly ruling Coorg as representatives of the different segments of the dynasty of Lingāyaṭ Rājas, gave rise to succession disputes between Linga Rāja I, younger brother of Muddu Rāja II, and Dēvappa Rāja, son of Muddayya Rāja. Dēvappa Rāja was successful in the struggle, and the unsuccessful Linga Rāja I sought the help of Haider, who was eagerly waiting for such an opportunity. Haider helped Linga Rāja I to ascend the Mercara throne, and after the latter's death in 1780 he assumed

[1] Coorg was traditionally divided into thirty-five *nāḍs*, each *nāḍ* containing several villages.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

●175 entire possession of Coorg, under the pretence of being guardian of the dead king's sons till they came of age. Meanwhile the sons were made to reside at the Gōrūr fort. A Muslim garrison was stationed at Mercara, the capital, and a former official of the Rāja was appointed governor.

These measures were extremely unpopular with Coorgs who rose in rebellion in 1782 and drove out the Muslim garrison at Mercara. They escaped Haider's retaliation as he was just then busy fighting the English in the south, and died soon after. In 1784 Tippu Sultan, Haider's son, marched through Coorg on his way from Mangalore to Seringapaṭam and threatened Coorgs that he would make an example of them if they rebelled again. Coorgs replied to this by open insurrection in 1785, and a force sent to put them down was driven back. Thereupon Tippu himself marched into Coorg with an army and,

> having lured most of the Coorgs to meet him at Tala Kāvēri, under the pretence of peaceable intentions and conciliatory measures, he suddenly seized them, and hunting out their families, drove them, altogether about 70,000 souls, like a herd of cattle to Seringapaṭam, where all the males were forcibly circumcised. Coorg itself was partitioned among Musalman Landlords, to whom the slaves of the country were made over, and additional labour provided from Ādoni in Beḷḷāry District. The only condition laid on the new owners was that they were to search out and slay all such Coorgs as might have escaped his vengeance, as he was resolved on their extermination. The country was held by garrisons in four forts, at Mercara (Jāffarābād), Fraserpēṭ (Kushālnagar), Bhāgamaṇḍla and Beppunāḍ; and on account of the accessions he had made to the faith Tippu now assumed the title of Bādshāh [king].[1]

The Coorg princes who had been removed from Gōrūr to Piriyāpaṭṇa by Tippu Sultan managed to escape to Coorg in 1788, after six years' confinement, and at once Coorgs rallied round their princes. Before long, Vīra Rāja IV, the eldest of the princes, occupied the entire country. Tippu sent a large force to reoccupy Coorg but this had to be diverted to the west coast at the eleventh hour to subdue a revolt in Malabar.

[1] *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, vol. xi, p. 13. The slaves referred to above were the Poleya servants of Coorgs and other high-caste masters. The number of Coorgs who were driven out of Coorg into Seringapaṭam by Tippu is variously estimated. Lewis Rice, for instance, estimates it at 85,000 in *Mysore and Coorg*, vol. iii, Bangalore, 1878, p. 111. Shri N. Chiṇṇappa estimates it at 110,000, *Paṭṭōlé Paḷumé*, p. 45.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

From 1788 till the defeat and death of Tippu in 1799, Vīra Rāja IV helped the English in their wars against Mysore. Richter tells us that in 1792 when Lord Cornwallis had driven Tippu into Seringapaṭam and the British occupied that island, 'about 5,000 Coorgs who had been carried away by Tippu, with their wives and children, altogether about 12,000 souls, made their escape in the confusion that ensued and returned to their native country'.[1] Their old homes and lands were restored to the returning exiles, and they seem to have been accepted back into the Coorg fold without difficulty.

Vīra Rāja ruled till 1809 when he died, leaving behind only daughters. This gave rise to the inevitable succession disputes in which, in the end, Linga Rāja II, younger brother of the dead king, emerged triumphant in 1811. He ruled till his death in 1820 when he was succeeded by his twenty-year-old son Chikka Vīra Rāja (Vīra Rāja V). The latter was an incompetent and sensuous tyrant, and in 1834 he was deposed by the British who annexed Coorg. The rule of the Lingāyaṭ Rājas had come to an end.

V

Lewis Rice tells us that Coorgs formed the bulk of the armies of the Rājas.[2] He writes,

> these mountaineers (Coorgs) had a considerable share of intrepidity and perseverance; stratagem entered largely into their system of tactics, in war they were remarkable for their predatory habits, and their neighbours accused them on those occasions of adding cruelty to pillage. Like the modern guerilla, though they were unable to contend openly with regular troops, they intercepted their supplies, cut off their communications, and harassed them by surprises, a species of warfare admirably adapted to second the natural difficulties that a hilly country must present. An intimate knowledge of it, a strict obedience, and a singular devotion to their chief [i.e. Rāja] accompanied by a remarkable attachment to their wilds and an equal gallantry in defending them, may in some measure perhaps have compensated the want of military skill.[3]

The system of land tenure prevalent in Coorg directly contributed to the maintenance and development of the military tradition of Coorgs. Land revenue was the principal source of the wealth of the Rājas. The assessment was based on a survey and

[1] Op. cit., vol. iii, p. 327. [2] Ibid. [3] Op. cit., p. 326.

I:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

Some were left free to look after land, and even those who were posted on guard duties were posted near their fields.

Jamma tenure conferred a double prestige on the holder in addition to the undoubted economic advantage. It signified that the holder had his roots in Coorg, and the duty of rendering military service to the state in times of emergency conferred on him the second type of prestige. The other important tenure in Coorg was *sāgu*, in which not only was land assessed at ten rupees per hundred *bhaṭṭis* of land, being twice the rate for *jamma* land, but also the holder was liable to render every type of service to the state except military service. During Richter's time, but for forty Coorgs, all the people holding land on *sāgu* tenure were non-Coorgs.[1]

The Rājas occasionally granted land on *jamma* tenure to non-Coorgs as a special mark of favour. Occasionally, Coorgs who held land on *jamma* tenure were transferred to the *sāgu* class as punishment for wrongs done by them.

VI

During the two centuries of rule by the Rājas, Coorg underwent a number of changes, political, administrative, and social. The authority of the local chieftains or Nāyakas was destroyed and the administration was centralized. The Rājas established a postal service (*anché*) for the use of officials only. Land was surveyed thoroughly, and the type of tenure under which each farm was held was recorded in the *Hukum Nāma* of Linga Rāja II (1811–20). The *Hukum Nāma* also contained a few paragraphs dealing with the powers of officials to try cases, civil and criminal, without reference to the Rāja. Serious offences like adultery, murder, and treason were tried by the Rāja himself. The recognition of the authority of the headman of a village and his council of elders was a general feature of the administrative system of the Rājas. They also recognized the authority of caste elders to try and settle caste disputes.

The long and bitter struggle with Haider and Tippu increased the sense of national identity of the inhabitants of Coorg. Coorgs played an important part in this struggle as they formed the bulk of the Rājas' soldiery, and also because they were specially selected for barbarous treatment by Tippu Sultan.

[1] Op. cit., p. 406.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

175 The Rājas were Kannaḍigas and under their rule the importance of Kannaḍa culture increased in Coorg at the expense of Malayāḷam. They were also Lingāyaṭs, who are staunch vegetarians and teetotallers, and possess a powerful and highly organized church of their own. Fifty-seven Lingāyaṭ *maṭhas* or monasteries, some of them heavily endowed, existed in north Coorg during Richter's time.[1]

The religion of the Rājas left its mark on the general population, and especially on Coorgs. The latter constituted the aristocracy under the Rājas, and a number of them held important posts at the Rājas' courts. Members of the royal family occasionally married Coorgs. The close contact which Coorgs enjoyed with the Rājas certainly helped in the spread of the culture and religion of the latter.

[302] Many Coorgs even today adorn their foreheads with three horizontal, finger-wide, stripes of *vibhūti* or sacred ashes, a mark [533] used by devotees of Shiva in all parts of India. Coorg folksongs frequently refer to a man or woman praying to Shiva soon after getting up in the morning. Most of the important temples visited by Coorgs are Shaivite in character.

VII

648 The annexation of Coorg by the British in 1834 marks the 178 beginning of the operation of vast political, economic, social, and 423 ideological forces on the people of that tiny province. For instance, the British gave *jagirs* or assessment-free lands to those Coorgs who had helped them in the suppression of the Canara Rebellion of 1837, and later these were allowed to be treated as gifts to the individuals concerned and not to their joint families. Traditionally, the joint family was the unit which owned land, and individuals owned only a little cash and a few movables. But by 1870, less than forty years after the annexation of Coorg by the British, some individual Coorgs had acquired for themselves farms and coffee plantations. 648 Richter applauds the change: 178

> . . . these individual enterprises seem to be the natural transition to an impending general social reform—the breaking up of the great houses, and the independent establishment of each married couple residing near their own paddy-fields, and eating the fruit of their own labour. The

[1] Op. cit., pp. 175-6.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

*136 "Rogues", are supposed to have been driven from the herd, to which they dare not return, and in consequence become furious in the highest degree.

[224] Elephants in Coorg are caught in pits, covered over with a slight framework to conceal them and placed accross the paths which the animals frequent. It is however no easy matter to beguile the sagacious creatures into this kind of [231] trap. If caught young they are easily tamed, but when of maturer age, a year and sometimes two are necessary to bring them into subjection. There are now no tame elephants kept in Coorg, but the Rajahs used to maintain many. Wild elephants are now far less numerous and the periodical elephant hunts less productive, though the Coorgs like true highlanders [656] are as eager for sport as ever. The indiscriminate slaughter of these useful beasts has however been forbidden by Government, and they are now only caught alive.

• 175 224 There is a granite slab in the Superintendent's Cutcherry in Mercara with an engraved record of a grand elephant hunt in the beginning of the reign of the late Rajah, which may well excite the jealous astonishment of modern Nimrods. The facts divested of oriental flourish are simply these: In 1822 the ryots complained of the great destruction of their fields and houses, caused by numerous herds of elephants, when the Rajah, "recollecting that it was the duty of a king to destroy the wicked and assist the helpless," resolved upon a wholesale destruction of the beasts and within 38 days he killed with his own hand 233 elephants and his soldiers caught 181 alive! Well may he exclaim in conclusion: "Is this not a great wonder, that men caught elephants alive, as if they were mice, and killed herds of them by using their seven weapons with the destructive force of roaring thunder?"

*136 The *Ornithologist* not less than the Botanist finds in Coorg a fruitful field for his researches, for birds of almost every tribe are plentiful throughout the country. The Mysore Museum

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

211 figures are in grotesque attitudes, but remarkably well grouped
532 and closely resemble the sculptured reliefs of Halibeed.
172 In the top compartment there is occasionally a lamp and a Linga both on pedestals, and these insignia, together with the Basavas in the third frame, evidently denote the heroes as Linga worshippers and aliens from the present Coorgs, who know nothing about them; the Canarese Gaudas, in whose countries they are chiefly found, claim them as relics of their ancestors and annually present before these stones offerings of cakes and fruit. The dresses of all the figures represented are not in the Coorg but in the costume of Hindus of the scantiest clothing. Col. Wilks in his *History of Mysore* Vol. I. p. 15. explains the sculptured representations in the
[795] three compartments thus: "The lowest describes the battle in which the hero was slain; the centre compartment represents him in the act of being conveyed to heaven between two celestial nymphs: in the uppermost he has arrived at the regions of bliss and is delineated as seated before the peculiar emblem of his religion—generally the lingum—for the practice of erecting monuments seems chiefly to belong to the sect of Siva."

211 In north and north-east Coorg similar stones, but with
798 simple and coarse sculptural figures are still erected by re-
766 lations of influential men who met with a violent death or were carried away by small-pox and cholera.

211 With the Coorgs it is the custom, to keep images of men
769 and women in Coorg costume chased in silver-plates in the *Keimatta*, which is a small square building near the house, in remembrance of their ancestors whose departed spirits are
[326] there annually worshipped. These plates which are of little artistic merit are made by the country goldsmiths. Near the
• [775] *Kannana house*, on that fine hill slope opposite the Central
[648] School in Mercara, there is a stone-slab with a picture in relief of a Coorg warrior. The stone is erected in the paddy

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

fields in remembrance of the (Dalavái) military chief *Kannana Doddeya*, who fell in an engagement with the forces of Hyder Ali near Kájúr-Bágalu in North Coorg in 1767. Before setting out on this expedition he said to the king Muddarájah: "I have twice returned from defeating the Ma-"homedans and made Salam to the Rájah, but this time I shall "not return." The celebrated Coorg hero Appachoo Mandana fell in the same battle. When, after the death of Hyder Ali, Tippu Sultan invaded Coorg, he burnt Kannana's house and hanged 24 members of his family, and the ruins are still visible. A silver plate 3 inches by 2 inches large, with a relief picture similar to that on the stone is preserved by the family in honour of their renowned ancestor.

Shásana-kallu. In some localities viz. in the temple yard at Bhágamandala, in the dévastána at Pálúr, in the ruined temple in Nallúr in Hatgatnád of Kiggatnád-taluq and at the Central School in Mercara (brought from Fraserpet) there are large stone-slabs of granite with inscriptions in peculiar characters that resemble the oldest forms of the Dravidian alphabets, but have not yet been deciphered. They are supposed to be *Shásana-kallu* i. e. memorial stones or records of Government grants. Their inscriptions might perhaps throw some light on the early history of the places in which the stones have been found. In the Mercara Treasury there are three copper plates 8 inches by 3 each, held together by a copper ring, the ends of which are united by a seal representing an elephant about one inch in length from head to tail. The 2 outer plates are inscribed on one side only, the inner plate on both sides. The inscription which numbers 1304 letters seems to be "old Kanada, but many of the letters strikingly resembling Lat and old Pali forms," according to a statement by the Bombay Asiatic Society. The text is said to relate to a grant of land to certain Mysore Brahmins in the villages of Uyambal and Badanegúppe. The date corresponds

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

rrated, as well as Malayálam influence on Coorg superstition, points to a settlement of Malayálam immigrants, and it is not unlikely, that in the days of the formidable Bellála dynasty, which was, or pretended to be, of the *Záda* branch of the Rájputs, a military settlement was effected in Coorg, as the Bellála Rájahs held sway over the whole of Karnata together with Malabar, the Tamil country and part of Telingana. When this kingdom was subverted by the Mlénchhas or Mussulmans about A. D. 1310 or 11, under Káfur, the western provinces and Coorg amongst them seem to have escaped the ravages of the conquerors, but ten years later Khusru was sent to complete the work of destruction; it is, however, supposed that the expedition extended only to Coorg (vide Elphinstone's and Marshman's Histories of India). This Mussulman conquest in the Deccan was of short duration. In 1336 already their possessions passed into the hands of the Vijayanagara kingdom and there can be little doubt, but that Coorg was included amongst its dominions, perhaps as an outlying neglected and wild jungle district, at least there are no records whatever in token of an early state of civilization. Col. Wilks in his History of Mysore Vol. II. p. 103 states, that the Coorgs are conjectured "to be descended from the conquering army of the Cadumba kings," whose capital was Banawási, in the southeast corner of the present Soonda or Sóde district of North-Canara. On what evidence this conjecture is based, he does not explain. It points, however, to the same conclusion, that a military settlement of some branch of the neighbouring ruling dynasties was effected in Coorg and this opinion is also supported by the Kávéri-Purána in its account of *Matsyadésha*, the puránic name of Coorg, as already stated. After the battle of Tálicóta in January 1565, the monarchy of Vijayanagara and with it the Hindu power of Southern India were broken and the country fell into the hands of petty princes or of those insurgent officers of

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the old government since so well known as Zemindars or Polygars.

Up to this time the little Coorg country seems to have been of no political importance. Its chiefs, called Náyakas, ruled over their small Kómbus (districts), levied taxes within their dominions, which they guarded by boundary and defensive ditches (the Cadangas) and to assert and maintain their self-constituted importance they engaged in frequent feuds amongst themselves. The Keimatta or ancestral monument of the Achu-Náyaka of Anjigheri-nád in Kiggatnád taluq is still in good preservation. The family was exterminated about 60 years ago. Of the Beppunád chiefs the name of Utta Náyaka of the Arméri house is still in popular remembrance. In Padinalknád the name of Karanembán, the chief at Bhágamandala is mentioned with veneration. There may have been more Náyakas, and very likely one over each of the 12 Kómbus or districts, but the names of their houses are no longer known.

According to the Ráya Paddhati in Dr. Francis Buchanan's "Journey from Madras through Mysore etc." vol. III. p. 125, one of the chief Polygars, who on the decline of Vijayanagara assumed independence, was Sadásiva, the son of the Gauda of Kilidi or Ikeri. Being endowed with a government comprising Guty, Bárakuru, and Mangalúru, his name was changed into Sadásiva-Ráya-Náyaka and he and his descendants, who were styled Rájas of Kilidi or Ikeri, possessed the government for 203 years (from 1559-60 to 1762-63 A. D.)

From intelligent Coorgs I have learnt, that during the reign of this neighbouring dynasty an Ikeri prince came to Coorg, and settled in Hálerinád. At first he assumed the pious garb of a Jangam or Lingaite priest and as such gained a considerable influence over the people of the surrounding Náds. When feeling sure of his position, he imposed upon

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when feeling sure of his position, he imposed upon
his followers instead of the voluntary Dhúli-batta (dusty-grain) 175
a regular tax of one and a half butty of rice and nine annas 643
eight pies in cash per house per annum. His next step was 648
to call upon the people, in alternate parties to guard his dwelling on the Háleri farm. These watchmen were called *Chaudigara*, a name ever afterwards retained for the Coorg Rájahs' troops. Having openly declared himself and being acknowledged by his adherents ruler of Háleri and of the surrounding Náds, the Padinalknád Karanemkáu Náyaka also submitted and so did the others under the condition, that they should receive three-fourths of the revenue and pay one-fourth to the Háleri chief. His increasing power soon threatened the safety of the Coorg Náyakas, who at last were put 643 648 174 177
to death and the whole country brought under the Háleri government.

That the Coorg Rájahs were aliens to the country is evident from the fact, that they were Lingaites, whilst the Coorgs [795] [791]
maintained their own crude form of demon- and ancestor-worship and rarely joined the Shivácháries. These are most numerous in north-east Coorg where the people are closely allied with the Mysoreans, and where the influence of the Rájahs was naturally greatest. Again in Padinalknád the Malayálam element seems to be predominant, whilst in Táwnnád, Bengnád and Surlabimuttanád the Tulu Gaudas and Bants make their influence felt. If a further proof were [144]
required to show that the Coorgs are a mixed race, I need only mention, that besides the striking difference in features and colour of the Coorgs, varying between the Caucasian and Mongolian physiognomy and between a fair and dark skin, the house-names also of many Coorg families clearly point to Mysore, Tamil, Malayálam or Tulu origin. Even within the memory of the present generation strangers were received by and incorporated with the Coorgs. There is now a dis- [578]
pute pending about six families in Kiggatnád, who ten years

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643 ago were, by the Head-Sheristadar Nanchappa, received as
648 Coorgs, but after his death were expelled from the clan by
174 the rest of the Coorg people. The settlement of the dispute
177 will perhaps be only a matter of time, but not of intrinsic
[578] caste spirit which as such is inconsistent with the notorious
[564] Coorg practice of assimilating cognate tribes into one clan, and with the fact, that during the Seringapatam captivity of thousands of Coorg families by Tippu Sultan, most of them were forcibly made Mussulmans and, though on the return to their country, they abjured Islam, the very process of circumcision deprived them of their previous caste—in a brahminical sense—and rendered that of their descendents defective. The renown of the Coorgs lies certainly not in the purity and antiquity of their genealogy, but in the union and strength of so many discordant elements into one compact body or clan, that bravely fought on every occasion of danger for the honour and safety of their adopted country, whether under the leadership of their own Náyakas or their alien Rájahs, and there can be no doubt that they would in time of need, with equal loyalty rally round the standard of their English Rulers!

619 To the question, how such a conglomerate of divers tribes
186 could have been formed into an almost homogenous body,
175 I would reply, that what might perhaps have been impossible
[628] amongst a civilized and politically powerful state, was a com-
[648] paratively easy process in a small uncivilized and secluded hill-country, which, seldom influenced by the politics of its more powerful neighbours, and in blissful ignorance undisturbed by subtle religious disputes, vented its savage strength in intestine feuds, till the despotic hand of the alien usurper subjected the turbulent chiefs, and united them and their adherents in deadly combat against common foes or for marauding expeditions. Their defeats as well as their achievements originated and strengthened national sympathies which time matured into a healthy spirit of clanship, that asserted

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itself the stronger, the narrower its local limits were confined, and the less it came into civilizing contact with surrounding nations. With the ascendancy of the Ikeri princes in Coorg, who spoke Canarese, this language became the written official medium and counteracted the Malayálam influence; but, however great the latter may have been through the intellectual superiority of the Malayálam people over the savage Coorg mountaineers, who dreaded their supposed supernatural powers, it never laid a beneficial hold on the Coorg mind by imparting the means of acquiring knowledge in the Malayálam tongue. It is true the horoscopes which the Kanyas wrote and still write for the Coorgs are in the Malayálam language, but they are unintelligible to the Coorgs. Thus it was left to the Coorg Rájahs of the Ikeri house to mould or rather to disfigure the Coorg mind into the character in which the English found it on their assumption of the Government in 1834; that it was of the most pitiable description, we have enough evidence to adduce: Lieut. Connor describes thus the condition of the people under Lingarája—and the picture applies equally well to the times of his predecessor and of the late Rájah—: "The chief of Codagu exercises an authority, that knows no restraint. He shares in common with the gods, the homage of the people and a more than ordinary portion of eastern humiliation is observed towards him; he is approached with a reverence due alone to the deity and addressed with all the servility fear could yield, or despotism claim; in his presence, in which no subject dare be seated or indeed within the precincts of his fort, the subject clasps his hands as in the act of prayer—the last sign of slavish vassalage—; and he is accosted in a language quite correspondent with this suppliant attitude; his subjects know no duty more imperious than attending to his mandates, which received with veneration are executed with singular precision, and his projects of whatever nature seconded without enquiry; nor would the

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643 175 most presumptuous hazard an opinion as to the propriety of his commands or actions; but fear alone produces this instantaneous compliance with his will, however capricious; and obedience is maintained by an exemplary severity that, however it may command submission, cannot create affection.

643 643 175 "The rigorous exercise of such unbounded power will of course be tempered by customs and usages, which having the force of law and sanctity of religion, must challenge some respect, but the real situation of the people is complete slavery; under so arbitrary a sway safety of person and permanency of property must depend on the precarious will of the ruler; political freedom forms no part of the elements of an Asiatic system of government, nor perhaps is it desirable it should; but the inhabitants of this little state are interdicted from almost any share of that practical liberty which their neighbours enjoy."

Col. Fraser, in his despatches to the Supreme Government dated 7th April 1834 states: "The whole and entire power of the country and almost the very faculty of thinking, seem to be concentrated in the Rájah himself, and we shall continue to know little or nothing of the disposition and wishes of the people of Coorg until the utter and permanent abolition of the power of the Rájah shall emancipate them from their present slavish fear."

Again under date 12th April 1834: "Their minds are so abject and enslaved, that they (the Coorgs) dare not speak against their late Rájah or they have not a motive for doing so."

Again in a letter dated 14th July 1834: "If we could succeed in dispelling the moral gloom, that has weighed upon the spirits and faculties of the people, as a consequence of the wretched system of government under which they were placed, an effect that, I am happy to say, is becoming daily more perceptible, I think the small district of Coorg will be

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found in its ameliorated condition a year or two hence, to possess many advantages denied to other parts of India."

4. HISTORY OF THE COORG RĀJAHS AS DELINEATED IN THE RĀJENDRANĀME AND FROM OTHER DOCUMENTARY SOURCES.

From 1633 to 1807.

PREFATORY REMARKS.

The Rájendranáme (account of Rájendra, the king of heroes) is the work of Dodda-Virájendra Vodeya, the hero of Coorg History and the beau ideal of the Coorgs of a warrior king, and comprises, from 1633 to 1807, a period of 175 years 2 months and 7 days.

A manuscript copy of the Canarese original was found in the Archives at Mercara in 1834, and, with the original English translation obtained from the records of the Chief Commissioner's Office at Bangalore, was edited by Dr. Moegling and printed for the Madras Government in the Mangalore Mission Press in 1857. The subjoined seal of the Coorg Rájahs ornaments the front page. The names of the Rájah and of his ancestors as well as those of English Governor Generals, Governors and other high functionaries are written with red ink throughout the book. The chronicle is very well written. It gives the history of Coorg, especially the account of the Rájah's exploits and of his intercourse with the officers of the East India Company in simple language. Not one foolish story, not one improper expression, disfigures this Canarese

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since the dynasty originated there and in consequence assumed the title of "Haléri Samsthán".

The *Head Quarter Station* is *Mercara*, the capital of Coorg. Its geographical position is in Lat. 12° 26′ N. and Long. 75° 46′ E. It is distant from Madras via Mysore and Bangalore 352 miles, from Bangalore 147, from Mysore 75, from Cannanore 68, and from Mangalore 84 miles. Situated on a plateau and in a central position, the locality seems to have been chosen from its comparative difficulty of access in former days. Muddurája selected the spot for a fort and in 1681—82 took up his residence there. Surrounded by an amphitheatre of undulating, grassy or slightly wooded hills—in former days covered with dense forests—the local position of the town, 3767 feet above the level of the sea and about 600 feet above the Kávéri-valley is extremely picturesque and beautiful. The Fort with its principal buildings: (vide p. 191 and 180) the Palace, the English church and the Superintendent's Kacheri, rises in the centre of the plateau. Outside the fort on the southern hill-slope stand: the *Regimental Hospital*, and in parallel rows, sheltered from the easterly and westerly winds, the newly constructed tiled *Lines* of the sepoys with the regimental bazaar and in the hollow beyond the Gaulika-village. Skirting the ridge to the southwest above the Lines, a parade-ground and promenade have been levelled and on the evenings, when the regimental band plays there, Mercara society is in the habit of frequenting the place. At its further end in a retired little garden is the "*Rájah's Seat*," the charming, homelike panorama from which attracts every lover of beautiful landscape. Close by is the *Burial-ground* of the Protestant community, where many an aspiring or weary European pilgrim has found his last resting place, among them Major Gustard, Superintendent of Coorg, and his two wives, Dr. Dunkan Macpherson, late Inspector General of Hospitals, and Major

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flourishing town, 20 miles from Mercara, on the Cannanore high-road and four miles from its junction at Perambádi with the Mysore road. It is a place of some importance on account of its coffee, rice and cardamom traffic with the Western Coast. The population amounts to 3024 souls, of whom 1,255 are Mussulmans, 1296 Hindus, 156 Jains and 313 Roman Catholic Christians, who settled here as fugitives from Tippu Sultan's conquered dominions. The town was established in 1792 by Dodda-Vírájender in commemoration of a meeting that took place between himself and General Abercromby during the first campaign against Mysore in 1791.

The town proved very unhealthy, but since the rigorous introduction of sanitary measures by Lieut. Mackenzie, generously supported by a Native Municipal Board, the health of the people has greatly improved. Vírájpet is prettily situated at the foot of the Maletambira hill on the top of which there is a large square-built temple. The town may be divided into the Roman Catholic quarter, the main bazaar and the Mussulman streets. Every Wednesday there is market, which attracts a great concourse of Coorgs. The merchandise is similar to that at Mercara. Of public buildings the most attractive is the renovated *Roman Catholic Church*, which Father Guillon reconstructed in simple gothic style and with a copper roof. The inside is gaudily ornamented with paintings and statues in stucco, his handywork, greatly to the taste and admiration of the natives. The *New Offices* of the Assistant Superintendent, the Taluq and Nád-Subadar's Kacheri behind the Traveller's Bangalow and above the town, promise to be an imposing and convenient structure, when completed. The *Traveller's Bangalow* surrounded by a high wall, is well situated on a knoll, which forms the highest point of the town. It was built of the material and on the site of the Rájah's palace, but without much regard to the convenience of European visitors who frequent the place. The

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872 Of *private institutions*, aided by Government, there are
797 the German Mission School at Anandapur and the Roman Catholic Boys' and Girls' schools at Vírájpet. Regarding *private unaided schools*, it is difficult to obtain reliable information as to their number and attendance. They are generally of a temporary and very insignificant character.

871 Of the 1,545 pupils at School in March 1870, 1,422 were
162 in Government Schools and 1,082 children Coorgs. Assuming that the present population of Coorg is 120,000, of whom about 25,000 are Coorgs, the number of children under education in the Government and aided schools, gives a proportion of one child at school for every 78 people of the whole population or nearly 13 per thousand; and as 1,082 Coorg boys and girls attend these schools, of one Coorg child for every 23 people of that race or 43 per thousand, the proportion in the case of the latter being unusually large and satisfactory.

C. CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE UPON THE COORGS.

1. THE ROMAN CATHOLIC SETTLEMENTS.

563 Whatever the moral and political vices of the Coorg
795 Rájahs may have been, in religious matters they showed a
643 tolerant and liberal spirit, which at the time put to shame
175 the intolerance of many Christian Governments. Dodda-
[798] Vírájender extended his protection to the poor fugitive Roman Catholics who fled from the claws of Tippu Sultan, when in 1792 Lord Cornwallis besieged Seringapatam. They were Konkanis from the western coast, had incurred Tippu's particular displeasure for their assistance in provisioning General Mathew's army and had come into his power after the fall of Bednore and the siége of Mangalore in 1783, when he settled

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them in and about his capital. The Konkanis are noted for their industry and skill of adapting themselves to circumstances. Dodda-Vírájender eagerly welcomed them into his depopulated country, granted them land at Vírájpet, procured for them a Priest in the person of Father John de Costa, a native of Goa, assisted in building a chapel and allotted to its maintenance a stipend of 84 butties of paddy and a certain amount of oil and candles, which allowance his successors continued and which the English Government since 1835 commuted into a monthly grant of Rs. 20, "its continuance being dependant not only on the Priest's conduct, but that of his flock, in as far as he may justly be considered responsible for it." This stipend is now looked upon as the Priest's salary from Government and attempts have been made, to get it increased, but Sir Mark Cubbon declared: "that the amount, the Priest enjoyed, had no doubt been deemed proportioned to the ordinary duties of his office, but if called to the discharge of any extra duties by the requisition of the members of his congregation, the Commissioner conceived that the latter should contribute the means of enabling the Priest to meet such extra-official calls."

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Pastoral jurisdiction having been claimed by the Archbishop of Goa, the Rev. F. Bernardino De Sta. Agnes, Bishop-Coadjutor, Vicar Apostolic at Mangalore addressed in 1846 the Superintendent of Coorg in the following letter:—

The Mission of Coorg, by a Firman passed by the Rájah in 1805, was founded to remain always under the jurisdiction of the Bishop, Vicar Apostolic of Bombay, who has ultimately transferred it to me. No jurisdiction over it was ever or is now possessed by the Archbishop of Goa. The jurisdiction of His Grace does not extend beyond that Portuguese territory as shewn by various Bulls which have emanated from Rome regarding the same, but the Archbishop, actuated by certain national presumption, pretends to possess something like an omnipotence in the spiritual throughout the whole of India and therefore sends his emissaries to excite dissensions and disturbances among the Roman Catholics, subject to the Vicars Apostolic, and he has

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/For a cultural history of the Coorg, see category 116, pp. 235-365./